

TO THE NATIONS

TO THE NATIONS

PAUL RICHARD

A new translation by

Aurobindo Ghose

With an Introduction by

Rabindranath Tagore

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INTRODUCTION

THE peoples are living beings. They have their distinct personalities. Therefore the French and the Germans, who not only live in close neighbourhood, but also contain in themselves in a large measure a racial similarity, have their individual differences that cannot be overlooked.

But the nations are not living beings, they are organizations of power. Their physical and mental aspects are monotonously the same everywhere. Their differences are merely the differences in degree of efficiency. When by some chance, through some cracks, the human personality sends up its own life shoots, the hard consistency of organization suffers, but the people finds its own manifestation. But where the subjugation of humanity by the machine is complete, there the Nation is triumphant. In the modern world the fight is going on between the living spirit of the people and the methods of Nation organizing. It is like the struggle that

went on in Central Asia, between man's cultivated area of habitation and the continual encroachment of desert sands, till the human region of life and beauty was choked out of existence. When the spread of the higher ideals of humanity is not held as important, the hardening system of national efficiency grows in strength, and at least for some limited period of time it proudly proves itself to be the fittest to survive.

But it is the survival of that part of man which is the least living. And this is the reason why dead monotony is the sign of the spread of the Nation. The modern towns which present the physiognomy of this dominance of the Nation are everywhere the same, from San Francisco to London, from London to Tokio,—they show no faces but merely masks.

The peoples, being living persons, must have their self-expression, and this leads to creations. These creations are literature, art, philosophy, social symbolism and ceremonials. They are different in different peoples, but they are not antagonistic. They are like different dishes in one common feast, adding richness to our enjoyment and understanding of truth. They are

making the world of man fertile of life and variedly beautiful.

But the Nations do not create, they merely produce and destroy. Organizations of production are necessary—even the organizations of destruction may be so—but when actuated by greed and hatred they occupy the best part of our world, crowding into a corner the living man who creates, then the harmony is lost and human history runs at a breakneck speed towards fatal catastrophe.

Humanity, where it is living, is guided by inner ideals, but where it is dead organization it is impervious to them. For this organizing endeavour has no growth, but merely augmentation. Therefore its building process is external and it does not fully respond to our inner moral guidance. In this building we can pile up one stone brick upon another and cement them according to our latest scientific recipe. But its foundation is the living nature of man, which cannot suffer such dead weight to be indefinitely loaded upon its heart. Therefore at last, some apparently slight cause makes it move and heave and the huge structure resting upon it sways and cracks. Once it begins to come down

we do not know how to stop it. It looks irrational and evil in its sudden course of disruption and mere spouting of moral maxims or prudent advices is unable to prevent the force of moral gravitation in its action of restoring balance.

The ideal of the social man is unselfishness, but the ideal of the nation is selfishness. Therefore, selfishness in the individual is condemned, but in the nation it is extolled. This leads to a hopeless moral blindness, confusing the religion of the people with the religion of the nation. Therefore we find men convinced of the superior claims of Christianity because Christian nations are in possession of the greater part of the world. It is like supporting a thief's religion by quoting the amount of his stolen property. Nations celebrate their successful massacre of men by thanking God in their churches. They forget that Thugs also ascribed their success in manslaughter to the favour of their goddess. But in the case of the latter their goddess frankly represented the principle of destruction. It was this criminal tribe's own murderous instinct deified; the instinct, not of one individual, but of the whole community, therefore held sacred. In the same manner in

modern churches, selfishness, hatred, vanity and greed in their collective aspect of national instincts do not scruple to share the homage paid to God.

We must admit that evils there are in human nature and in spite of our faith in moral laws and training in self-control they come out in individual cases of unrighteousness. But they carry on their foreheads their own brand of infamy, and their very successes add to their monstrosity.

All through man's history there will be some who will suffer and others who will cause suffering—and the conquest of evil will never be a fully accomplished fact but a continuous process in our civilization, like the process of burning in a flame.

All creation is the harmony of the contradiction between the eternal ideal of perfection and the infinite incompleteness of realization. So long as the positive ideal of goodness keeps step with the negative incompleteness of attainment, so long as there is no absolute separation between them, we need not be afraid of suffering and loss.

Therefore in former ages when some parti-

cular people became turbulent and tried to rob others of their human rights, they sometimes achieved success in their adventures and sometimes failed, and it was nothing more than that. But when this idea of the Nation, which has achieved universal acceptance in the present day, tries to pass off the cult of selfishness as a moral duty simply because that selfishness is gigantic in stature, then it not only commits depredations but attacks the very vitals of humanity. It unconsciously generates in people's minds an attitude of defiance against moral law. For they are taught by repeated devices the lesson that the Nation is greater than the people, and yet this nation scatters to the winds every moral law that the people hold as sacred.

It has been said that a disease becomes most acutely critical when the brain is affected. For it is the brain which is constantly directing the siege against all disease forces. The spirit of national selfishness is that brain disease of a people, which, for the time being, shows itself in red eyes and clenched fists, in violence of talk and movements while all the time shattering its natural system of healing. It is the

power of self-sacrifice, the moral faculty of sympathy and co-operation which is the guiding spirit of social vitality. Its function is to maintain a beneficent relation of harmony with its surroundings. But when it begins to ignore the moral law which is universal, and uses it only within the bounds of a narrow sphere, then its strength becomes like the strength of muscular convulsion, which not being a movement of harmonious health, hurts itself in the end.

What is worse, this moral aberration of peoples, decked with the showy title of patriotism, proudly walks abroad, passing itself off as a highly moral influence. Thus it has spread its inflammatory contagion all over the world, proclaiming its fever-flush to be the best sign of health. It is causing at the hearts of peoples, naturally inoffensive, a feeling of envy at not having their temperature as high as their delirious neighbours, and not being able to cause as much mischief as these others do, but merely having to suffer it.

I have often been asked by my Western friends how to cope with this evil which has attained such sinister strength and dimensions.

In fact, I have often been blamed for merely giving warning but offering no alternative. Having been bred in the atmosphere of system-worship our mind has got into the habit of a superstitious reverence for system. Therefore when we suffer as a result of a particular system we believe that some other system will bring us better luck. We have forgotten this simple truth that all systems produce evil sooner or later when the psychology which is at the root of them is wrong. The system which is national to-day may assume the shape of international to-morrow, but so long as men have not forgotten their idolatry of the baser passions, so long as vanity and greed and jealousy can claim moral sacrifice from us when they assume bulkiness of dimensions, the new system will become a new instrument of suffering to man or at best will become ineffectual. And because we are trained to confound good system with moral goodness itself, every ruined system makes us distrustful of moral law.

Therefore, I do not put my faith in any new institution, but in the drainage of those stagnant moral pollutions which give rise to poisonous vapour. For this we are to look for indivi-

duals all over the world who must think clearly, feel nobly and act rightly and thus become the channels of universal moral truth. For this truth once introduced goes on with its own living creation, overcoming all hindrances. Our moral ideals do not work with chisels and hammers, but like living seeds in proper ground spread their roots in the soil and their branches in the sky without consulting architects for their plans. What is necessary is purity in thought, feeling and will, and the rest will follow.

This is the reason why, when I met Monsieur Richard in Japan, I became more reassured in my mind about the higher era of civilization than when I read about the big schemes which the politicians are formulating for ushering the age of peace into the world. It is not upon mere number or bulk that our salvation depends, but upon the truth which can afford to look small. When gigantic forces of destruction were holding their orgies of fury I saw this solitary Frenchman, unknown to fame, . . . his face beaming with the lights of the new dawn and his voice vibrating with the message of new life, and I felt sure that the great

INTRODUCTION

To-morrow has already come though not registered in the Calendar of the statesmen.

January 17, 1917. RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

TO THE NATIONS

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I

THE FALSEHOOD OF YESTERDAY

AND now, if we were to tell the truth?...

If in this world of deceptions, we called frankness to the rescue; if we looked at facts as they are, whatever they are?...

Are then the men who prefer darkness to light still so many in number? Let us leave the business of deception to the professional diplomats and rulers. Trickery and falsehood are their means of life. But the others are dying of it—all the others. They are tired of dying of it. And the day is coming, it has already come, when the peoples, wearied of being dupes and victims, will turn for their salvation to the

Truth. The day is coming when men, tired of being led, like flocks, to slaughter by their false shepherds, will cast away their yoke, and choose as their leaders the men of Truth.

* *

The truth—this war is making it heard in the voices of all its cannon. Who can remain deaf hereafter ? It is destroying every falsehood, and to begin with, the falsehood that was hidden under the cloak of peace.

The name of peace was given to a state of things that permitted the great nations to do, throughout the world, whatever they pleased with the small nations. And the great nations claimed to be pacific when, not wishing to war with the strongest, they contented themselves with warring, without too many risks—on the weakest.

The event has shown them that this could not long continue. For the war against the weak has, in the end, for its consequence and sanction the dreadful clash of the strong.

Thus great Justice wills. This world is a closed circle ; everything in it rebounds. Each act reacts on the doers. Nothing is lost, all adds to the reckoning. Every violence prepa-

res another. Force calls against it force, as thunderbolt calls thunderbolt. And that is why Europe has seen descend on her the very scourge that so often and in so many places she let loose on others.

Men must have been blind not to have seen, impending and descending on her, the terrible cloud she herself had gathered.

* * *

Which of the belligerents of the great war is there, from this point of view, who can declare himself innocent of its causes ? Which of them is there whose hands are clean of the blood that has been shed ?

Each one of the nations that are at grips, if it were disengaged from the partialities of its own idea of justice, could follow step by step the track of the events which led it to the catastrophe, and could see how rigorous and logical was the fatality that links this catastrophe to its own acts. The Moroccan war—to take but this one example—was not its necessary corollary the Tripolitan, which in weakening Turkey was in its turn to let loose the war of the Balkans, veritable prelude of the great European conflict ?

Even those in appearance the most pure from all responsibility for the struggle are not so in real truth.

True it is that while some appeal to the right of force, others proclaim the force of right. But whatever are the words their lips utter, one can see their claws that close on the living prey, for which, without avowing it, each one is fighting.

To hear them, never had the oppressed nations so many defenders. Each wishes to liberate the one the other oppresses. Russia and Germany vie as to who shall deliver Poland. Alsace and Ireland, Serbia, Egypt, Belgium or India, all have their champions somewhere. And all these champions are indeed liberating them by killing each other.

* *

There is the root of the evil, the true cause of the war. Some indeed willed it, thinking to find in it their profit, but all prepared and rendered it inevitable.

It is the logical, the expected result of selfish policies and unscrupulous ambitions, the necessary product of material greed, the just price for the shameless or hypocritical iniquities of

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all. For all have nourished in themselves, apparent or disguised, the same demon and the same beast of prey.

It is the war of the nations hungry for conquest against those glutted with possession. Appetites were unequal—each has the appetite of which he is capable. But by dint of exercising them they ended by meeting. The earth is small. And now they are devouring one another.

It is the final settling of accounts around all the booty of the earth; the last mellay of all the drunkenesses and all the thirsts closing the orgy of the Powers.

It is the lesson that the peoples of the present are giving to the peoples of the future, pointing the path of shame, of ruin and of death.

And this is not the only lesson of the war.

II

THE ILLUSION OF TO-DAY

This war was not only inevitable, it was necessary and one might say willed by the will of the future.

There was needed this bankruptcy of diplomacy to clear the sky of Europe of the lies with which it was infected.

There was needed this ruin of the great nations, not to liberate the world from this or that power of domination to the profit of the others, but to liberate it from the spirit by which it was dominated.

There was needed this foundering of a proud and false civilisation that the upward human effort might be freed from the barbarous mechanism and commercialism in which that civilisation claimed to imprison it, that Humanity might take a step forward.

There was needed this hell for the conversion

of the peoples who let it loose. There was needed this chaos that out of the old order a new order might be born, a new heaven and a new earth arise.

* * *

These are the true stakes of the war and not those for which the belligerents are contending.

Each of them believes in his victory. This is the illusion of to-day. What meaning can this word victory bear in this war of mutual exhaustion and extermination ?

The more the common pouring out of blood and gold is prolonged, the more the red flow of all the forces of life widens, the more evident is the absurdity of the word.

How many victories must there be on one side and the other to assure the defeat of all? They may announce and publish their triumphs, they may celebrate them and fill the world with the rumour of their glory, but they cannot prevent the terrible reality of the common suicide that advances, day by day, from striking them all. For every day of this war, whatever the gains or the losses of one side or the other, represents for all a fresh disaster.

The brutal pretensions of one side to world-domination will surely come to ruin. That can be predicted with certitude. But the cold ambitious calculations of the others will also be brought to naught. That is no less certain.

And the sole gain, the sole victory that can be expected from this war are not those they fought for, but the gain, the victory their common ruin will assure to human progress.

* * *

While the Governments are keeping up this illusion of victory in the mind of the peoples, they are nourishing themselves on the still greater illusion of a possible return, after the war, to the state of mind that prevailed before it. They flatter themselves that after this tremendous adventure they can take up again their petty occupations. They count on recovering to-morrow the same kind of peace that they kept yesterday. In this they as grossly deceive themselves as when, while day after day they were themselves preparing the catastrophe, they imagined they could avoid it.

No, the gulf has been dug between what was and what is henceforth possible. The torrent of things will not turn back in its course.

And this war will not lead them where they desire.

Do they then imagine that the events that are shaking the world are without import for the future, that the supreme experience through which the nations are passing will be of no profit to them and its great lesson bear no fruit for others—that so many sorrows and so many heroisms, so many crimes even, so many sacrifices, this bloody holocaust of ten peoples, all these tears and all this blood will have no other effect than to leave them free to recommence to-morrow what they were doing yesterday ?

Will the scourge that is striking down so many men and things, leave standing only these men and these things? Shall not the plough that is labouring the earth to open it to the new harvest tear up the old stubble ?

* *

Enough of illusions. The peace that is to come will not be the one that selfish interests look for. For the war they are making on each other, the war the Powers are waging, is above all the war that the Power of the Future is waging on them all.

If the war is the work of the faults of all, it is also the work of the forces that are labouring for the progress of all. It is the stroke of their battering-ram against the obstacle they had to break. Those who declared it only obeyed the command of Fate by which they were condemned. It is in vain that some lay claim to right and to justice. It is the right and the justice they have violated that is compelling all to this locked struggle from which they can emerge only by becoming more upright and just.

For it will endure under this form or under another, followed by another war or by something other if need be, until the god of this corruption of the human which is the existing order cries for mercy, and a new order can be born.

Yes, this civil war of Europe will become, if needed, a civil war in every nation of Europe ; it will perhaps bring to grips Asia and Europe ; it will precipitate the whole of humanity against itself, but it will only stop when that is done which had to be done, when the conscience of humanity is awakened in the peoples. That is why, as nothing could prevent it—for

it was time that it came to put its red hot iron on the wound of the world—nothing till now has been able to stay it. It could not be that the world should suffer in vain.

* * *

Look at the events from this point of view, then you will understand them. You will perceive how great is the blindness of opposing and self-interested prejudices. You will understand the character and the “*raison d'être*” of this great shock in which everything seems calculated for the long duration in which none believed and the final wearing out for which none wish.

You will understand that which is hidden, that which must be seen behind what appears. And beyond what is disappearing, that which must be waited for and willed, that which is coming—the Future on its way. Something, Someone whose footstep sovereign and formidable is shaking the world.

III

THE REALITIES OF TO-MORROW

TO-MORROW, another step in front, in the night, towards the dawn, another step on the hard path that mounts from the abyss to the summits, the path that Humanity ascends with bleeding feet, like a calvary.

How could it be otherwise? A vulgar optimism or pessimism is blind to what is to be. Neither the one nor the other is of a stature to measure what is coming. For that overpasses the short views of private or of national interest. Only in looking from on high can one see from afar.

To-morrow, it will be perhaps the end of the war. But it will not be the end of the crisis. It will be its further extension, and without doubt its aggravation.

Nothing could be hoped for if all did not go from bad to worse until all is transformed. It is from the worst that the best must issue. But we have not yet come to the worst.

For the war is no more than a prologue. And its end, whatever it may be, is not what most matters. What matters is that which shall follow, it is the events that come to finish the work.

Ill-chance indeed might have brought the war to a stop before these events were sufficiently made ready. But this misfortune has not come about. Henceforth they are as inevitable as was the war itself, they are its logical consequences. And if nothing, until this moment, could prevent the war or interrupt it, who to-day can stay their needed course? Several of them can from now be foreseen with certainty, with a greater certainty than the end of the war itself. For that end...



There is in truth the possibility that the war may cease suddenly as it began, without our knowing exactly how and why. If the death of a grand-duke was enough to provoke it, one does not see why one circumstance or another

should not be enough to end it at the most unlooked-for moment.

There is also a possibility that it may not at all finish, at least in the ordinary sense, that the purely nominal state of peace which reigned before it, may be replaced henceforth by a permanent and more or less effective state of war, a kind of *status quo* already put in practice for that matter by certain belligerents now resting on their oars whom one might call sleeping partners in the war.

At any rate what is certain is that this war will not have an end like any other, and that its end will be the end too of the existing order of things. For the war will last as long as is needed to make impossible any chance of survival of what went before it.

Madness comes quicker than it goes. Fate that willed the ruin of the nations of Europe, first made mad the States that desired the war and then did as much for those who wish now to see it through to the end. Therefore they have tied each other's hands, mutually insuring themselves against all chance of peace. Thus the equilibrium of the opposing forces has been so firmly constituted that its solidity can defy

every shock. It can be broken a little everywhere without being shaken in the whole. This is a state of things that can last long.

Moreover, the longer the war goes on the more the reasons for waging it increase. For some wish less and less to lose what they have gained, and others more and more to regain what they have lost. Thus the very duration of the war increases its chances of further prolongation. The further it advances, the further its end recedes.

It is as yet but a war of lingering hopes. If it ever becomes a war of lingering despairs, that will not bring its end any nearer.

* *

There was indeed a great obstacle in the way of the long duration of this war, the economic obstacle. The nations have surmounted it with a light heart.

It is true that the economists were not at all in error when they said that the war could not last longer than a few months without bringing the ruin of the belligerents. But they were in error in thinking that the ruin would prevent them from continuing it for years. Vainly do they now cry: "Peace or ruin!" The nations

will not stay in their course. They have no longer the choice. They have long since been ruined and more even than they think. But the more they are ruined, the less it matters. It is now ruin that pushes them to war yet more than war that pushes them to ruin. And the greater becomes the loss, the greater also the desperate obstinacy to play for the supreme stake of the game.

The nearer the Governments of Europe are to the end of their resources, the more they will be driven to risk their last chance. As long as they have men to sacrifice, their armies will remain face to face, guarding the moving frontier outlined by their front of trenches. For the war is now for them a question of life or death. They know that it cannot come to a stop without sounding the hour of the reckoning they will have to pay for illusions betrayed and disappointed hopes.

Yes, they will delay it to the last end, having at least a chance of life as long as the peoples consent to die.

To-morrow, is it not the day of these peoples?

* * *

If before then, by some miracle of military or

scientific genius, some still more infernal discovery, some surprise of fate, that which they call peace and victory became possible, would that end the war?

As long as the state of things which gave it birth remains unchanged, it will be born again from its own ashes. Peace will be only a truce, victory only an opportunity for a new conflict, and that conflict probably a struggle between the allies of yesterday. For there is nothing so perilous as a settlement of accounts between armed and ruined peoples.

And besides there are other nations, armed and well armed, in the world. There are other egoisms; other hungers, other nascent imperialistic ambitions awaiting their turn. There are nations enslaved who await their hour.

To-morrow, is it not for them all the day of their desire? Let it come then, the last day of the things that are dying, that after it may begin the new week of the world !

IV

THE DAY OF THE CAPTIVES

In the forward march of the world's peoples, the nations of Europe have played the part of the sheep-dogs. Hard-heartedly and with a harsh severity have they done the work. They have shown no mercy to the laggards. They have fixed their fangs firmly in the living flesh. If the dogs had not ended by fighting among themselves, where would have ended this zeal that devoured ?

If the ruling nations had remained united in their formidable complicity, they would have enslaved the world, paralysed its energies of free growth, absorbed and fattened on its forces.

Have we not seen of what they were capable when, in 1900, the allied armies ravaged Peking and together committed, under the lead of Germany, all the atrocities with which they now reproach her ?

At that moment the possible domination of Europe over the rest of the world was brought to judgment and sentence was passed upon it.

Her strength had become a menace to the progress which it was her mission to serve and it has been shattered, her force of domination divided and turned against herself, her equilibrium destroyed to the profit of the equilibrium of the world.

* * *

For the peoples on their slow road of progress are sometimes the arm that strikes and sometimes the flesh that groans and suffers. They spur on each other and the weapons of the strong are the goads of the feeble. Turn by turn they are masters or slaves—turn by turn, for none remains for ever a master or for ever a slave. A day of deliverance comes to all. That day is dawning now for those whom Europe had made her slaves.

For this war is indeed a war of liberation, but not in the sense understood by those who wage it. Holding entire races under their own yoke, they would liberate this or that little nationality from the yoke of others. It is the imperialism of others that they combat. And

those who would least accept this form of government for themselves impose it most heavily on the conquered peoples.

Now it is not certain that constitutional imperialism will be abolished by the war ; but this is sure that it is destroying piece by piece colonial imperialism.

It is not certain that it will so soon liberate the small enslaved peoples of Europe ; but this is sure that it is hastening day by day the deliverance of the great enslaved nations of Africa and Asia.

The claw that is pressed on the distant prey seems it is true to fasten ever more firmly. But it fastens in proportion as it feels its force leaving it. It less holds than clings to the prey which it will have to abandon to-morrow.

* * *

Is it not this for which the conquered nations are waiting patiently or with groans of suffering ? Can it be imagined that they are not thinking of it or that they who have been subjugated by force will remain submissive from gratitude when the force is no longer there ?

Are they alone without any thirst for a free life, these great peoples of the Arab tongue and

race whom the West has been at pains to liberate from the enslaving Turkish tutelage, these peoples whom a common Fate even more than a common faith unites in one block of impatient hopes from the Atlantic to the Red Sea and from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf ?

All these peoples—Arabia, Egypt and the rest, from Tripoli to Morocco—only await, to become one great nation, a leader. The leader, the hero for whom a race looks always comes, he comes and comes again until he triumphs. To-morrow he will break the chains of his people.

And India—the mother of us all—India, the breast of the world—for which is the nation that has not been suckled by her ? India bound while she slept, whose awakening it is now sought to stifle, can it be thought that the three hundred millions of men who inhabit her will not at last break her heavy but fragile chains ? However different they may be from each other, now they are united by a common suffering. One soul is in them all, conscient of the great past and of a free future. And this soul knows that to-morrow is the day for which she has so long been waiting. It is not in prohibiting their

sacred books, imprisoning those who read the Bhagavad Gita and treating their sages as malefactors that it is possible to delay the hour of the approaching destinies...

And this hour will open a new era, an era of resurgence for all the captives whom their masters have trampled under foot in all the continents of the earth. The adult nations will learn to treat no longer with contumely the aged races they oppress and with pitiless cruelty the infant peoples they torture.

Belgian Congos will be no more.

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How could Europe, with so many slaves throughout the world, have none at home? Old slaves there she has and new ones too.

For by a cruel irony, this war of liberation has had as its first result to enslave in Europe itself the nations that till now were free.

Never for instance has Serbia undergone a fate so extreme as that she has been suffering since the fight was started to protect her. But for that fight would it ever have come upon her?

The day of grace will come also for all these captives, old or new. It will come not

when their official protectors have vanquished for them the external enemy, but when, tomorrow, all the European peoples, beginning from those who enslave them, have overthrown the far worse enemy, the common enemy who makes them slaves within. For all are slaves.

That will be the last day of the war, the day of the peoples; the Great Eve after which there will rise for all the nations of Europe, great or small, vanquished or unvanquished, the Great Dawn.

V

THE GREAT EVE

There will be revolutions in most of the countries of Europe—and notably in Russia, in Germany and in England. This is what everyone is saying and expecting. And the Governments know it unless they are blind. And even if they refuse to know, they fear and have the foreboding of it. One has only to watch their actions to be sure of it.

This prospect of revolution is not the least among the reasons for the excessive duration of the war. But the longer the war lasts, the less has it any other possible issue. All seems and all is in truth calculated to make it work out to this one conclusion.

For the war has a purpose even if the belligerents have none. It has an aim and end which neither side wishes to attain, but at which all will be forced to arrive. This end is

very simple. The old evil must be destroyed to the very roots; the old foundations of the life of the peoples must be turned up and replaced by the foundations of a truer and better civilisation. The sword of Europe must continue to turn upon itself until it touches to the heart in each nation the monster that hides there and that must be slain.

* * *

Peace may then be signed between Governments, between peoples. But it will not be signed between peoples and Governments, between the victim and the disease.

The Governments are not the disease; but they represent and express it and give it a body. They are its incarnation. It is in the doings of the rulers that is made manifest the hidden vice of a people; and when a people rejects its vice, it rejects along with it all that recalls it to its eyes. The idols it breaks during its conversion are not guilty or responsible, but still it breaks them. And that which took the profit of the ancient error may well be called on to bear its punishment...

The Governments could only escape from this just retribution by being the first to be convert-

ed, by recognising and confessing the true causes of the suffering of the peoples and by destroying them in themselves. But which is the Government in Europe that is capable of this honourable reparation ? It would be prevented by its solidarity with all the others.

It is the peoples themselves who will do the needed work, and they will do it on the day when they come to know all that is now being concealed from them.

Till now they have known only the truth of death. As to all the rest, they have heard only lies. Lies about the reasons of the war, lies about its results, lies about its aims and consequences, about what was and is and will be ; lies that truth one day will scatter to the winds.

Then will be the Great Eve, the Eve which will put an end to the war, or follow close on its end, and transform it into another, the only war that can be the last of all. For it will be waged against the things from which war is born, against the conditions that make it possible. That will be the Great Eve of all that must die, the day of vengeance of the dead.



How could it be otherwise, even if one looks only at the facts that are the most evident and irresistible ?

O Governments of Europe, will you be able to hide from them to-morrow this reality of a disillusionment without hope, made the greater by the falsity of the prospects with which you lured them on ? Can you hide it from them, when the whole scaffolding of illusions that you erected in their front so that they might not see, crumbles to pieces ?

And will you be able to hide from them to-morrow the reality of ruin, when having gone to die they must come back to live, and to live how and on what ?

Can you hide it from them, when on their impoverished numbers and exhausted forces you impose the impossible burden of your debts ? Can you hide it from them when they will have to turn into sweat of taxation the little blood that is left in their veins ? Can you hide the fifty thousand millions they owe to-day, the hundred thousand millions they will owe to-morrow ?

And this mountain mass, which is crushing you, you wish them to raise in order to save

you, or else to bury themselves under it with you. They will choose rather to raise themselves on it and dance there the terrible dance of your old hopes, as you danced it yourselves when you raised yourselves on the mountain of their dead !

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And will you hide from them the reason, the one and only reason of all this ruin—your insatiable love of gain ?

How can they fail to discover that there is the secret poison that is killing them ? And how, once they have discovered it, can they do anything else but spit it out of their mouth ?

When suddenly there shall come upon them the vision of this international chessboard on which you are playing, between neighbours, with their bodies and their possessions ; when they recognise that the so-called State is nothing but a pompous title for a shady agency to which they lend, without knowing it, the credit and guarantee of their signature written in blood ; when they know what syndicates of private interests are governing them, what transactions are hidden under the great words with which they are spurred to heroism, what

profits were calculated on the number of their killed, then, O then, the peoples whom now you fling on each other like dogs on a quarry, will all turn to rend you. Together they will destroy the hundred-headed vulture that is devouring them.

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Poor ignorant peoples, easy to deceive, herds of slaves destined to the sports of the arena, herds led to the slaughter, none of them wished for war.

They went constrained by force, confiding in those who are the cause of their ruin, intoxicated by them with the impure wine of hate.

They went without understanding. But in vain for two years have their masters put into a thousand false terms the problem of their misery. They have put it before themselves in its real light : "How is it that while the immense majority of men, in all countries, ask only to live by work in peace, all in every country are thus hurled headlong into war ? Why and by whom ? Who is it, in all the countries, that makes of them thus the murderers of their brothers ?"

They will not return without having found

the word of the riddle. And which of them now does not know it? As yet it is not known what kind of soul has been formed in them in this inferno. Out of that hell, they will come changed men—saints or demons. But all cursing alike that which created it and ready to crush it under their feet.

Will they be too few in number after the great slaughter? But who then will remain to oppose them? They have made the great sacrifice. What have they to fear after that? Will they be too weary? But there is no rest for them in that great eve, blood-red and desolate, no further repose until there shall come the great morning. All has been taken from them. They are encamped in the midst of ruins, in a charnel house. They are now the desperate men who have nothing left to choose but their last act. They have already chosen it. Why should they show mercy to that which shows mercy to none? To that which might lead their sons after them from the same peace to the same war and the same hell?

To-morrow the colossus of gold and brass with feet of clay will cover the world no longer with its shadow but with its fragments.

VI

THE DAWN.

Such is the truth of the war ; the truth that has to be seen through the chaos of things and proclaimed high above the tumult of events.

The war would have no significance at all if it had not this significance of the future.

No ideal significance,—the same imperialisms and despotisms, internal or colonial, are there in both camps. What reproach can Czarism bring against Kaiserism, or Junkerism against Jingoism ?

No religious significance,—on both sides protestants and catholics invoke their God against their co-religionists facing them ; while schismatics and Mahomedans join indiscriminately one party or the other. Never before has religion counted for so little.

No ethnical significance either,—the most distant races are neighbours here in the same alliance, and the nearest confront one another

with the same hate. As for the kings, all except the Grand Turk are of the same blood.

No economic significance,—the ruin of all is assured, to the apparent profit of the neutrals.

And lastly no military significance,—the one possible issue is the defeat of all in this duel to the death in which each combatant proclaims himself victor until his last gasp.

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It is necessary to look deeper. For behind the drama that is being enacted a still greater is unfolding. This war is a battle of things invisible behind the mellay of visible things. It is the war which the old order is waging against its own self, casting upon each other the forces of fraud and violence, that they may mutually destroy one another.

It is a great spectacle this of Europe in flames, after receiving through centuries of greatness the reward of her energy and endeavour paying now to all her peoples the wages of their iniquities.

It seems as if she had kindled this immense conflagration to purify in it all her self; as if she wished to die that she may be born again, transfigured.

For behind the Europe which is dying there is another Europe which is making ready to live. And it is to a better future that she is offering this sacrifice of her wealth, this holocaust of her blood.

If it were not so, the great Eve which is coming would be for her the prelude of the great night into which dead peoples and corrupt civilisations go down ; the starless night deeper yet than the darkness from which they rose.

For in this collapse of all that was, she must choose henceforth : either a long sojourn in the lowest regions of the abyss amidst the ruins, in the obliterating shadows of decadence, or the rebuilding of a new world. A cataclysm has closed up the old paths : now either the fall to the darkness or the soaring towards the dawn.

* * *

The dawn is not the coming back of the preceding day, it is the breaking into light of that which never yet has been, the promise of a future that will have no likeness to the past. Too often the future is only a lengthening out of the past ; while its shadows still linger over us there cannot be the dawn.

Which will be the first nations to come forth

out of the shadow? Those perhaps which having unchained the tempest will be the first to understand the lesson. Those in any case who will be the first to accept the teaching of the common defeat. For on all it will lie heavy until in all the spirit that is leading them repents. All will feel reigning over them the law of death until they have discovered a nobler reason for living, until they have accepted a new law of life.

For the dilemma that confronts the peoples is always the same: either to remain as they are and suffer what they now suffer, or to renew themselves to the very depths of their being.

It cannot indeed be a question of the transformation of some internal or external habits, of a few superficial modes of existence. The overturning of a world cannot have for its end a number of mere diplomatic or administrative modifications, a change of personnel or of constitution. That would not be sufficient to turn their destinies. Of what use would it be to change men if there were no change in things, or to change things if men remain the same?

It is the very spirit in men and things that must change. It is the soul in each people that

must be transformed. It is the consciousness of a new world that must come to birth in all.

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In all nations there are men lost in the crowd who carry within themselves this consciousness of the new world to be. No longer do they belong to the departing age. They seem to come from the future.

They are not numerous, but there are many who follow them from afar and draw nearer to them each day. Many are there who already feel their illusions crumbling and their hates fading away, and are receiving into themselves the first rays of a dawn for which they did not look. As time advances their number increases. To-morrow they will be the multitude in each people.

Let them unite over the ancient barriers. For they are in every nation the children of a common country. Let them unite in a common endeavour to raise this maimed Europe of to-morrow from the ruins of the Europe of yesterday. And if this new Europe delays in answering to their call, let them proclaim the great message to all the continents that are of

good: will. Let them salute the dawn over the East before it illumines the West.

There are men in all peoples who are not the men of a single nation only, for they serve Humanity. Higher than duty to country they place duty to humanity. It is to them that mankind now looks for the price of all its labour, the fruit of all its suffering.

Let them arise to announce the law of justice to the nations. For it must reign in the society of the nations as it reigns in the society of the families. It must unite the peoples as citizens of the world, just as it unites men as citizens of the nation.

Together let them inaugurate the peace of man. Let them accomplish the prayer of the future and the promise of the past. For, behold, all generations, those that were and those that come, have their eyes turned towards the generation of to-day : it is the living generation that must fulfil the great hope of the centuries. And this hope, after a crisis such as never was before in history, is the hope of a day such as never yet dawned for Humanity.

PART II

VII

THE LAW OF THE PEOPLES

Whether they will or no, the nations live in a society upon the earth. Each of them constitutes a true individuality in Humanity, a living and acting collective being.

Unhappily the mind of these collective individualities have never yet risen beyond the level of the animal life and consciousness, and their society has been hitherto a society not of human beings but of animals more or less wild and savage. The most evolved among them have turned into beasts of prey.

It is not without reason that they themselves have chosen as symbolic emblems to represent them ferocious animals like the lion, the eagle, the bear, the leopard, or else others like the cock less powerful but equally combative.

Till now the only law that has governed the mutual relations of the peoples has been the rule of the appetite of the wild beast, the law of force, the law of war.

It is time that as collective beings they should pass beyond the animal stage and, attaining the human level, become true moral persons.

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There is only one and the same moral law for men and nations. The law that each people imposes on the individual it must impose on itself also. Both are governed by one and the same right; that which is a crime for the individual is a crime also for his country. If egoism, cupidity, theft, violence, murder are looked upon as vile and degrading things in the isolated human being, how can the collective man, the nation, commit them without dishonour? In what does the honour of a nation differ from the honour of a private individual? And of what use is it for a nation to invoke this honour and defend it sword in hand if it violates it continually in the face of all by its practice or brigandage and disloyal action?

The honour of a man does not lie in his strength; no more does the honour of a people.

It lies in the use which man or nation makes of its strength. Honour does not consist in riches, it consists in the manner in which riches are acquired and put to use. Honour is not to be found in domination over others, but in domination over oneself. It stands by respect for oneself and respect for others.

Men of honour are to be found in all peoples, but where is the people that is not always forfeiting its honour ? And till when will the nations continue to make a vaunt of that which degrades them ?

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The rule of conduct for the individual was so to act that his action could always be held up as an example for all.

It is the same rule of conduct that the nation should observe. Its way of action should be such that each of its acts can be held up as an example for the individual.

Otherwise by what right does it complain of its criminals and inflict on them such severe chastisement ? A country has always the criminals it deserves.

Why should the citizen be more honest than his country ? And how is it that till now in-

dividuals have accepted condemnation for the very acts in which the country takes glory ? Or rather, how is it that they have allowed their rulers to commit in the name of the country acts which would be infamous in the citizen ?

The country should set the example.

If it is shameful for the individual to show no respect for the weak and the aged and to use its strength against the defenceless, the country ought not to do these things.

If it is shameful for the individual to spy on his neighbour, to betray his host, to be false to his pledged word, the country ought not to do these things.

If it is shameful for the individual to owe a gain to fraud or menace or to secure a profit by violence, the country ought not to do these things.

And the citizen, if he is a patriot, cannot and must not approve of these things or permit them. He cannot and must not become their accomplice or agent, even though he drew for it the wages of an ambassador.

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Men talk everywhere of patriotism, and they are right. Patriotism must be exalted ; it must

be ennobled and not degraded. Too often it is a thing coarse and base.

The country is preeminently the mother. But who then would have his mother a liar and thief, brutal and cruel?

And yet in every country there are patriots who are never so proud as when this mother of theirs has seized on the goods and lands of others, has done violence to and perhaps slaughtered a weak and less well-armed nation, and reduced to slavery defenceless populations. Yes, patriots are seen uplifted with pride when their country, their mother, has committed one of these acts at which they would die of shame if it had been their own son who had been guilty of it.

True patriotism is not made after this fashion; it does not consist in urging the country incessantly like a blood-hound to the chase and the slaughter, nor in applauding her when she returns from the hunt carrying in her jaws some new prey.

They are the true patriots who blush at the things of which the others are vain, who mourn when the country is enriched with ill-gotten gains: for then she appears to them not greater but poorer, stripped of her true riches and her

beauty, and clad only in the rags of her moral destitution.

Where are they in each country, these true patriots, who love their motherland well enough to wish her to be honourable and pure, to find intolerable anything that makes her vile, to endure never hereafter that her face should be splashed with blood and mire ?



These are truths of an elementary order ; and doubtless we must still be very barbarous when we are obliged to consider common rules of morality as if they were ideals. But it is with these that we must begin. This first step must be taken. For it is the progress we have to make at the present day.

What the individual is in the family, the family in the city, the city in the province and the province in the country, the country must now become in the society of the nations.

It must learn to live not for itself but for that which is greater than itself. There lies for nations as for men the true moral law and the one way to salvation.

Every nation will henceforth have the experience—as those of Europe have already had it—that outside this way of salvation all the roads it follows are leading it to death.

VIII

THE IDEAL OF THE NATIONS

The greatness of man and nation is measured by the greatness of their ideal...on condition that it is an ideal realised. For too often the ideal is only what is professed as opposed to what is practised.

What was the ideal of the world that is now dying ? If it is to be judged by what it professed, never nobler principles shone in the sky of Humanity : Freedom, Justice, Science, Progress, Civilisation. But if it is judged by what it practised, never a deeper abyss yawned between the fact and the ideal.

What have the nations who call themselves great made of Freedom ? A monopoly for themselves. And those who appeal most to its name are also those who are least willing to grant it to others. They would be free to enslave the world.

What have they made of Justice ? A safe-guard for their interests. But the rights of others were measured in their eyes only by the measuring-rod of force.

What have they made of Science ? A tool to serve their greeds. History will say this of them : they acquired much knowledge, but used it to do evil.

What have they made of Progress ? A thing without a soul, an egoistic and material means of domination.

What have they made of civilisation ? A privilege calculated on the number of their firearms, a hypocrite pretext covering evil undertakings, a mark of fraud.

What have they made of Humanity ? A field of exploitation, a market for traffic. They have treated the nations like a possession that one buys and sells, like cattle that one rears for food.

And that is why the light of all these great words has turned into the sombre blood-red flame of this mighty conflagration.

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The ideal of the nations was greatness. But this ideal was small for this greatness was

material. Nothing counted save what could be counted.

The nations willed to be great by power and riches, by the power that money gives and by the money that power gives. Their will was to be great by the number and extent of their territories. For the possession of territories procures at once money and power. Therefore they sacrificed everything to what they called their interests. They have sacrificed to it their life itself.

To amass, to conquer, this was their programme. They have made it good, they have portioned the earth among them. What more could be done? What but to begin the sharing over again by reducing the number of the sharers; to aggrandise themselves still more by forcing their way through one another. It is what they are attempting now.

As long as there can be found on earth nations possessed by the same demon of insatiable desire for material increase, they will always act thus. Even if one day there remained two alone face to face, these would continue to slay each other.

Is not the experience sufficient? And must

it for ever be renewed ? How many empires in the past were rich, powerful, conquering, whose ruins now are landmarks on the road without issue upon which the empires of to-day have chosen to follow them. Will they now at least learn to what lead this frenzy of power, this passion of gain ?

* The world that is now dying took possession of the domain of matter. It did well, for humanity must possess that domain also. But because its ambition was limited to the material, because it had made of this narrow aim its bound, it attained it only to break itself against it. For the will of Nature is to go further. Her will is to lead the nations higher. And only those nations can live that follow her steps towards the new ideal.

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The true measure of greatness is not extent in space. True greatness is not a thing of kilometres. The ideal for a nation is to grow in height, not in surface. It is not the soil a nation occupies, but the men of whom it is composed who must grow. It is not their numbers, but their value that must increase. The greatest country, in its limits vast or narrow,

is the one in which Humanity reaches its highest stature.

Who would not rather be a citizen of the smallest country in the world if it were fair and noble rather than of the most gigantic of our colonial empires? Who would not prefer the Athens of Plato to the Rome of Caligula?

Neither is wealth the ideal. For money is not the measure of true value. A nation's true riches are not the gold that glitters but the genius that shines and radiates. Its true riches are those which it adds to the treasure of all. It is rich when it discovers a new principle of progress, when it inaugurates a higher mode of life. It is rich not when it heaps up things that already are, but when it creates the things that never were before; when it increases the gains of the race; when it extends the consciousness of mankind.

Again, the ideal is not power. The only legitimate power is that which gives happiness to men. Force imposing itself is not the measure of true power. The only real, the only lasting conquest is to conquer minds and souls. The true power is a force of radiance. The glory of a nation is to enlighten the world.

Certainly strength, riches and material extension are good and great things, but on condition of being put into the service of the ideal. And the very rivalries of nations will be fruitful when they dispute among themselves the honour of realising the ideal.

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The ideal for nations seems to be the opposite of their self-interest. For it is disinterested. But in reality that which is disinterested is their supreme interest: All others are of a secondary importance.

For the ideal is that which the future tends to realise. The ideal of to-day is the reality of to-morrow. Thus in the measure that a people serves the ideal, it makes an alliance with the future; it assures and makes ready its own future. In the measure that it realises the things called Liberty, Justice, Progress, it realises itself. When on the contrary it forgets them, when it turns from them to think only of its own egoistic interests, it is turning away from the future, it is entering into conflict with it. Now in this conflict even the strongest perish in the end. And it is so that one after another, great though they were,

all the egoistic empires have come to destruction. And which among those of to-day can survive?

No nation lives for itself alone. A nation lives only by the services it renders to Humanity. As long as it remains serviceable to humanity it remains in existence. Even if it thinks of itself only, even if it is careful only of its own ends, in the measure in which those ends involuntarily serve the common interest it is tolerated. But when it ceases to be serviceable, the force that supported it is withdrawn. It languishes and disappears; for it is rejected of Humanity.

To-morrow the nations will know these things that a terrible destiny is teaching them to-day. None any longer will be mad enough to transgress these laws. But which among the nations will first have the wisdom to understand and the glory to practice? Which great people, blessed for ever, will be the first, giving the example to all the others, to make Humanity its higher aim of life, disinterestedness its sovereign law, the ideal its safeguard, the Future its ally?

IX

THE PROGRESS OF THE NATIONS

The hundred countries that portion the earth are the hundred provinces of the world. The hundred nations that inhabit them are the hundred families of mankind. But none thinks of that. Each thinks only of itself.

And indeed most of them know nothing of each other. They do not live in a society. Each leads in its own way its little individualistic life and would have it unperturbed and untroubled. Whatever favours their habits they call progress. They are the provincials of the earth.

Others on the contrary move and live in a wide circle. Theirs is not a sedentary egoism. They are interested in the rest of the world, because they have interests there. Nothing can happen in the world without their having a part in it and deriving from it a profit. These

are not many in number—hardly a dozen—but they make themselves felt all over the place. And as they meet each other everywhere, the clash or the union of their interests have ended by shaping them into two or three antagonistic groups, two or three rival syndicates. These live in a society, in little societies of great nations. And these call progress whatever favours their ambitions.

It is very fortunate for the others that these syndicates have till now been rivals. A federation of wise and just peoples, governing the earth, would be a thing much to be desired, a combine of despotic nations exploiting it in common very much the contrary. It is to that that the creation of the united States of Europe would have amounted, the spirit inspiring each one of its disunited States being what it is. The world war has put an end for a long time to come to this dream of a great world trust.

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The nations then live in that state of anarchic individualism which they condemn so strongly in the individual. They abandon it only to become each other's slaves or accomplices. Their sovereignty means that they recognise nothing

above themselves. They recognise only their "sacred" egoism destructive to themselves and others.

For egoism is a latent conflict of all against all. It ends always in a brutal struggle. And even when it desires peace, it makes war inevitable. Alliances and groupings can do nothing to prevent the clash but only make it more general when it comes.

This is called barbarism only when the arms used are not of the latest pattern. The distinctive sign of the civilised peoples is the armed peace which does not exclude war upon the weak and whose essential feature is a fabrication of more and more murderous machines in view of the approaching contingency.

While certain scientists are occupied in this kind of invention, others with a still more scientific intelligence undertake to prove that the law of struggle, of selection and survival of the fittest which governs some of the phenomena of animal evolution, necessarily rules that of the human peoples. Nothing could prove better that these peoples have not yet passed beyond the animal stage. And in truth so long as they remain there, each one of them will become in his

turn the prey of the most strong. For which one of them can always remain himself the strongest? Still the very play of their egoisms, stimulating them by the ordeals they inflict on each other, is tending to make them pass out of the animal into the human stage of progress. Thus the law of brute struggle, the law of the jungle gives place for them to that of mutual aid and fraternal co-operation. The struggle for life turns into a union for life. After the wild beast era, the age of the Society of the Nations.



All the history of the nations moves to this goal. It is one long effort to prepare them for it. Across peace, across war they have drawn near, they have become locked with one another. The earth has become to them more narrow, and the world everywhere has come to wear the same face. They have exchanged their worst and their best. All their enduring possessions are common possessions. For which of them to-day has the monopoly of art, science or thought?

Centuries of labour and conflict have inter-married, by consent or by force, their races,

their creeds, and their civilisations. Even their hatreds have made them one. On all the battlefields of the world, victors or vanquished, they have mingled their life, they have mingled their dead. They have sealed in blood an unsought for brotherhood. Hatred is ever but the wrong side of love, its first, its obscure challenge. It creates an intimacy more profound perhaps than the closeness of treaties and alliances. It leads the peoples by dark and crooked paths towards their oneness. One day they will hate that which made them hate each other.

It is when they are separated by their conflicts that they learn how near they are to each other. The number and strength of the ties that bind them are discovered in the breaking and their range unsuspected till then becomes apparent. The most indifferent of those who look upon themselves as no more than spectators of the struggle gets the experience that the whole body suffers when one of its members is wounded.

Never has the solidarity of this body asserted itself so strongly as now. The magnitude of the war of to-day gives the measure of the

unification of the Humanity of to-day. There is no domain of human life that remains untouched and untroubled by its reverberations. It is the general crisis in which the whole world feels that its destinies are being worked out and that the old conditions of the life of men and nations are to change. For a new era begins.

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A great wave of life has swept across the world. It started from Europe, it has vivified America, it has awakened sleeping Asia. Happy the peoples who can sleep through a long dreamless night of repose after their long days of labour. For the others die.

Now the wave of life having made the round of the earth has returned upon Europe. It has changed itself there into a wave of fire. It is consuming her pride of race. For Europe has to renounce her contempt for that which is alien to her. It is consuming the national pride of the peoples. For the nations have to learn to wish to be not masters of one another but servants of Humanity.

Progress it is true makes use even of those who refuse to serve it, But after using them,

it breaks them. The dominant empires of the past were its blind and unwitting instruments and they were destroyed one after the other. It is the same with the Empires of to-day. In their unjust undertakings they have been working for human unity without willing it. Now it is at work on them in its turn. For everything in them must be broken that is an obstacle to this unity.

And this will be the fruit of the work:

Since it is the unity of the nations that is being prepared by all the efforts of the centuries, since this unity is the principle and the aim of all progress, and itself the supreme progress, only those henceforth will be called the progressive nations whose anarchic sovereignties become the servants of this unity.

It is the consciousness of this unity that measures the degree of culture and civilisation of a race. Only those henceforward will be honoured with the name of civilised men or civilised nations who will unite to seal the new, the only lasting and peaceful alliance of man with man and of all the nations in Humanity.

X

THE CHARTER OF THE NATIONS

What man is in the nation, the nation is in Humanity. If it has the same duties it has also the same rights. And these rights which France had formerly the glory to proclaim for the citizen must now be proclaimed for the nations, citizens of the world. The three principles inscribed by her on the frontal of modern life and summing the charter of the individual are now being inscribed on the threshold of the coming times and sum the charter of the nations.

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Liberty! All nations small or great must be free. Alone are great those who do great things for Humanity. And wherefore should not the small nations do still greater things than the great ones?

Free to exist. Free to have an independent existence or to group themselves if they will.

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This liberty is the one foundation, the sole guarantee of the rights of nationalities. And these rights are the same for all, the same for the nations of Africa and Asia as for the nations of America and Europe.

Free to grow each after its own kind ; to evolve each according to its own genius. Humanity is impoverished when any one of its peoples is denied the means of expressing any one of its multiple aspects, of manifesting any one of its potentialities.

Free to live and organise themselves in their own way. Unity is not uniformity. All forms of government are admissible.

Let all the nations be, and let them be what they will. Let them group and organise themselves as they please, so long as each of them and each of their groups however great it may be serves something greater than itself, the common nation and country, Humanity.



Equality ! All the nations are equal in their rights. All are equal before Right. This equality is the mutual guarantee of their liberty. All are its sponsors. As for civilised men so for civilised nations, an injustice done to one is an

injury to the rights of all. As such it should be felt by all. And the greater the attaint to the common right, the weaker the nation that suffers the outrage.

There can be no civilised men or civilised nations without Justice, without an equal Justice for all. And before this justice the rights of the weakest have as much force as the rights of the strongest. For might is not the measure of right. There are rights superior to the right of might, and they are those which limit the rights of might.

The civilised man or the civilised nation cannot make use of his strength against the weak. No one can be his own dispenser of justice. Alone is valid the justice that is assured by all to all.

All being equal in rights are equal also in the representation of their rights. All have an equal right to participation in the law that judges them, in the sovereignty of the supreme Nation of which they are a portion.

Therefore it is not only a few peoples whom must take their place in the parliament of mankind, it is all the peoples. All those of good will, the great and the little, the rich and the poor, the

enslaved as well as the dominant nations. For there will be no more slaves or masters. Besides, what have these last to fear ? If their mastery is legitimate, they have no need of any other privilege, in order to establish it, than the privilege of wisdom and science. Mightier than the power of arms is the power of the spirit. What if they are a minority among the nations ? It is the minorities, the elite that lead the world. As long as they are the elite, they will continue to rule it. But they can only do so according to Justice, in Fraternity.



Fraternity ! Mutual respect and benevolence. All countries are sisters. The earth is their common mother, and however diverse their skies, the same sun shines on them all. Whatever the soil that has fallen to their portion, they are on the march towards the same goal. How could they fail in the end to recognise their common fraternity ?

Hitherto love for one country has always meant if not hatred, at least contempt or indifference for the rest. And yet are they all the expression varied in a hundred ways of our

one and common country, Humanity. He alone loves his country with a true love who sees in her the living image of Humanity. But then how could he fail to see its image also in the others? The day is coming when every man will learn to treat as his own country all the countries of the earth, to recognise in every country in which he dwells one of the sacred homes of the human family and to fulfil in that home not only the duty of a stranger to his host but of a friend to his friend, the duty of a son in one of the mansions of his mother.

Then there will be no more spies upon the earth.....

The nations will no longer maintain in each other's lands personages well known and impossible to know, skilful in deceit and elaborately trained in the art of being deceived, busying themselves discreetly in indiscreet work. Instead of enemies in disguise they will exchange sponsors of mutual friendship. Their official representatives will no longer be more or less adroit brokers of the life of the peoples, more or less lucky players for their interests. They will be the wise and truthful counsellors, the delegates of the common good whose high

assembly in each nation will assume the importance of a grand council of Humanity. Is this too idealistic an expectation? Is it to ask too much of the nations of to-day to be civilised peoples, putting into practice the principles of civilised men and liberating each other from the yoke of the barbarism which is weighing upon all?



Outside these principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity there is no future for the nations. For all the existing nations accept servitude, mutual degradation and war. Outside this Republic of free, equal and fraternal peoples there is no place for anything better than the institution of a few despotic and formidable groups, rival fragments of Humanity, of which the empires of to-day would be but the cornerstones, and the nations, great and small, the coerced and discrowned subjects. And between these groups there would reign a permanent state of conflict of which the present war, however terrible, would be no more than a simple prelude, an initial episode, a sketch in little...

The path which the nations are following

leads there. And already they are outlining themselves on the horizon, the monstrous silhouettes of these pluri-national organisms, these political and military "diplodoci" already in formation.

But Nature has no love for monsters : she creates them only for special and momentary ends. Those of the geological ages were not a success ; and those that the giant combines of nations are attempting to create to-day will not succeed any better. As soon as their work and use is over, they will disappear.

They are born to prepare these nations for something better. They raise their menacing shadow before their eyes that all may know what fate awaits them if they will not halt on their evil way. Absorbing for a time some portion of their anarchic sovereignties, they have compelled their egoisms to take a first step towards the future solidarity of the republic of the peoples. They have made the present conflict what it had to be, frightful enough to serve as a lesson for ever to all ; destructive enough to break down in all the resistances of the past ; sufficiently world-wide for the charter of the future to be proclaimed to all the world's peoples.

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Now they have but to choose : either alliances of war with their chains of iron and a mutual destruction, or the free alliance of peace between all, that they may create together.

Pan or Moloch !

XI

THE PEACE OF THE WORLD

It is long since men have begun to realise what a folly, what a madness it is for beings cast for a few brief moments on this speck of dust that is a planet in the universe to spend so much care on dividing and subdividing it and take so much pains in slaying one another, instead of helping each other to grow in light, in strength and in joy.

It is long since they have been trying to cure this madness, to put an end to this crime. Why is it that even yet they have not succeeded ?

Philosophers have preached peace, prophets have come to announce it to the world, but the world did not receive it. For peace cannot be a gift from heaven ; it must be one of Humanity's conquests. And Humanity was not yet born in human hearts.

Empires have essayed to found this peace,

great conquerors have dreamed of imposing it by force, and their dream has perished stifled under its own hard coat-of-mail. Peace cannot be founded by force, nor gentleness by violence. Peace will not come out of war.

Once again to-day, the nations are attempting the old adventure; they are counting upon war to kill war, upon the power of militarism to destroy the power of militarism. If this absurd homeopathy had been a possible thing, war would have ceased long ago.

They expect from an armed victory the peace of the world. The peace of the victor, the peace of the strongest cannot be the peace of the world. The world will have no more of any "Roman Peace." It awaits, it needs a human peace, a peace signed not by the vanquished, but by the free nations, a peace dictated by Humanity to all the peoples.



If it is not martial strength neither is it pacifist weakness that will give peace to the world.

Never had pacifism clothed itself in so many forms of promise to end in such a downfall.

It had become the official gospel of the peoples and even of the rulers. A Czar had proclaimed its resounding message and at his call the States had met in solemn conclaves. A palace, a temple had been raised to Peace: it is from then that dates the era of the most terrible wars that have ever overwhelmed the world.

All the jurists of Europe had legislated and created tribunals of peace, that the arbitrament of right might replace the verdict of force, and drawn up regulations of war to introduce right even into force itself. Never has force so outrageously violated right as since then.

In all countries the workers had united against war and they had sworn to each other to revolt if conflict came. Their "International" was a guarantee of peace. Now they are slaughtering each other, excited to the carnage by the very leaders who before were preaching to them fraternity.

All the peoples were multiplying agreements and alliances in order to exorcise war. Never before had so many treaties bound them to the "maintenance of peace." And behold the unclean spirit of war driven out from all sides "has gone into the dry places and taken to him seven

other spirits more wicked than himself." Fourteen nations are now in course of mutual massacre.

Pacifism flattered itself that it had allies in a growing economic materialism and in the very excess of modern armaments. Under the reign of the God of Shopkeepers the battlefields of the future would be the trade markets, the only possible war the pacific battle of commercial competition and the only conquests the conquests of production. And in fact it is the world of gain that has been leading the world, and it has led it to its ruin. The economic war is now costing Europe all the millions the nations possess and twenty million dead. Production has devoured the producer.

The destructive power of modern machines was to have inspired a dread that would compel men to remain at peace. For the last twenty months the inferno is at work, letting loose upon earth the torments of hell, torturing with a thousand tortures man and the elements—and the war lingers and spreads. Why?



Why did there come about this great failure of

European pacifism? First, because it was only European. What the nations desired and their jurists and their diplomats, their workmen and their emperors, was not Peace but their peace: it was not the true peace of all with all, but only their own peace, egoistic and false, their impossible peace.

There were judges at the Hague, but their justice was not for the unfortunates whose distant lands were coveted. Their regulations did not prohibit as contrary to international law, to the honour of civilised peoples, armed aggression against defenceless populations,—if they happened to be of another colour. And when it occurred no socialist dreamed of revolt. There was no alliance of peace which did not comprise some assurance for each of a free hand in some new colonial hunting-ground. The pacifists took no heed. It was a thing that took place beyond the limits of their pacific horizon. One thing they ignored only: that the sword which smites will in its turn be smitten.

The only possible and enduring peace is the peace that all confer on all. As long as it is possible for a single nation in the world to

suffer from the evil of war, the rest will not have peace. Europe wished to have peace in Europe, while she planned bloodshed elsewhere. She has not had and will not have that peace. In vain will the present belligerents sign peace among themselves, if they do not sign it with the rest of the world, if their future congress is not the Congress of Humanity. For peace belongs to Humanity alone. Humanity alone can give it to her peoples when in the midst of their assembly she shall rise up supreme.

Free first your slaves that they may sit beside you or speak no more of peace.

* * *

But above all free your hearts. For from them come peace and war. What avail all the efforts of pacifism when peace is not in the heart of man ? War comes and sweeps them away.

Institutions, legislations, courts of arbitration, international agreements, leagues and conventions, increase of mutual exchange, progress in the relations between peoples, favouring conditions and efforts after peace, all these are but so many obstacles and barriers set up in the way

of the destructive torrent... The torrent has passed and swept them away. The more they were accumulated in its front, the more has its flood swelled and the greater has been the devastation. To go to its source was the right way. But these things could not reach there. Their work was external, they organised the outsides of peace. Peace could not be their issue. No external organisation will ever prevent war, for it is from within that it comes.

The root of war is in man. In his failure to respect man; in his disdain of Humanity. There is the source from which gushes over all the earth the river of blood. And there too will be found the possible obstacle that is capable of making war for ever impossible. Without this obstacle psychological, internal, all the others that are external will only raise up illusions and impossibilities, phantoms of peace to front the living spectre of war.

All the false scenery has collapsed, and all the false hopes also. It was not enough to pacify the things of old : appeasement is not peace. Pacifism falls with them. But its very defeat reveals to it the secret of true victory.

What neither the empires nor the religions of the past could do, what the labours of civilisation in the present have attempted in vain, what the ages have desired and prepared, one thing will accomplish, one new thing ; the awakening in man of the consciousness of Humanity. It is she who will inscribe in the hearts of all the word that disarms.

Then shall be born from the heart of man the Peace of the world.

XII

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF HUMANITY

A voice comes across the centuries. It comes out of the remotenesses, rises out of the depths of the conscience. All have heard it. None listen. But none can stifle it. It dictates a command imperious, sovereign, formidable: "Thou shalt not kill."

Another voice rises up from the earth, a cry of terror.... O the horrors, the abominations of war! Things without a name. All the crimes that man commits against man. What monster hides behind the human face and how is it that these things are possible in spite of all the progress of the civilised world, and even in proportion to its progress?

Why are these things possible? Simply because in every town, in every village, in every hamlet of this civilised world, are

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schools in which little children come to sit and a master is there to teach them that the highest duty of man is the duty dictated by the national interest, that when this interest gives the command the murder of man by man becomes an act of virtue and that one must obey the chief who says " kill " rather than the conscience that says " Thou shalt not kill."

Yes, it is because he is taught from his childhood to think in this manner that every man in every nation may one day become an assassin, a butcher of his brother. And after that there is no impossible crime, there is no limit to the horrors of war.

For where begins, where ends the horror of war? Do you let loose a wild beast with a request to him to be human? It is well that war instead of becoming humanised should have made itself foul and vile. Man had not a sufficient disgust for war. He attached honour to human slaughter. All that dishonours it in his eyes is preparing the day when to kill will become for him the impossible thing, when the old madness will no longer be.



Not to kill. In no case. Under no pretext. This is the law that will kill war.

As long as this law is impaired by any restriction, as long as men can think that it is permissible for them to kill when they are in numbers, that collective assassination is more respectable than individual murder and that individual murder becomes glorious when one receives pay for it and a uniform, war will be. War and all its atrocities.

As long as civilised man has not cleansed his heart and thought from the germs of homicide put into him by the false values of his education, the immorality of its very morals, as long as it seems moral for his educators to fill the eyes and the brain of the child with glorified pictures and stories of war, with obsessions of human massacre, as long as the one preeminent crime is not branded as a crime and the supreme immorality is not beyond all others the act that gives death, that act, that stroke will descend without pity on the nations. More than this, for to the lessons of the school are added the object lessons of things. As long as the social law from which comes the example is the first to infringe the law of humanity, as long as it

does not respect a man even in the guilty and human life even in the life of the criminal, as long as its punishments are modelled on the crime and to the hidden crime of one the reply, cowardly and cold, is the public crime of all, it is on all that the blood shed will fall back in a rain of blood ; and legal murder, the death of the guilty, will have for its sanction the pain of death inflicted by war on millions of innocents.

This is the ultimatum that Humanity addresses to the peoples.



One day these things will be no more. For the voice that cries : "Thou shalt not kill !" is no longer an alien voice coming from outside. It is rising from the heart of the multitude. It is becoming in all the living voice of Humanity. It is giving to men a new commandment. It is teaching them a higher duty : the human duty.

Till now the highest duty of man was to the country. But there is above all others a country greater and nobler and more immortal, but more misknown also, more disinherited, a country without patriots, a country that possesses fifteen hundred million inhabitants, but

as yet counts only a few citizens. Henceforth it is to her that man shall owe this highest duty. For she is the supreme country of all men: Humanity.

In the course of centuries of progress he had learnt to place higher than his family interest the national and patriotic interest, to love his country more than his family, to sacrifice himself and his family for the country. He must now make a further step in progress, he must learn to place higher than the patriotic the human interest, to love Humanity with a wider and purer love than that which he bears to the country, to sacrifice himself not to what this country is but to what she must be in Humanity.

As this greater family, the country, has become conscious in him, so must become living in him the consciousness of this country of countries, Humanity.

None is truly a man except he in whom this consciousness of Humanity lives, whom the sense of the human has taught to think: "First of all I am man, afterwards only English, German, Russian, Japanese. I am a man in Humanity before I am a patriot in my country,

I owe myself first of all to my duty as man. The duty of the citizen comes afterwards."

And the first law of man is the respect for Humanity in all men and of human life above all things. This is the first of all the commandments for man : "Thou shalt not kill." To die for one's country is a greater duty than to live for one's family. But still greater than to get killed for her is the duty of not killing. In no case, under no pretext.

There are men in this war who have accomplished this human duty. They have let themselves be killed, but they have not killed. They have died with high heart, with unsullied hands, for Humanity.

They are living in her and like her through all the ages.



For Humanity is a living being. Blind are they who only see in her an abstraction ; like men, like nations, she is a real being conscious of herself, even when men and nations are not conscious of her. She is the common mother who overpasses and embraces them all. She bears them within her ; the life of all is depend-

ent on her life. It is the torrent of her forces that animates the peoples. It is the blood of Humanity that circulates in all.

And this living being has a living body, and the nations are its organs. For all are members one of another. There is a living heart in her that still sleeps in the hearts of men. For they have not yet learnt to extend their love so far.

A thinking head has to be created now for this living body. And that this may be there must be assembled from all the nations of the earth the men who think the thought of Humanity. It is these who will lead one day the nations.

If the concentration of the force of cities could, in giving birth to the modern nations, create and transform so many things, what new prodigies will not this new concentration accomplish, more powerful still, of the forces of Humanity? Uniting herself, mistress of her destinies, liberated from the bonds of the inferior existence, she will create the conditions of her new life: she will create the new man for whose coming all nations wait. She will realise the immemorial hopes, the ancient dreams,

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the painful dreams of earth's future and its joy.

Man ! who in thy madness tearest thyself today with thy own hands and torturest thyself unto death, the hour is come to heal thy ills by thy awakening and thy growing conscious.

Nations ! living members of a body ignorant of itself, members bleeding one by the other, the hour is come to put an end to your mutually inflicted suffering, by growing conscious that you are one flesh. Awaken to Humanity.

The hour is come. Divine being who sleepest in the bosom of men and peoples, awake, Humanity !